

Arrivals of *Cynthia cardui* L. (Lep.: Nymphalidae) in Devon

Further to my earlier note on migrant lepidoptera in Devon (*antea*: ?), I can report several subsequent and significant influxes, particularly of Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui* L. On 30 May I witnessed a major arrival of this species, together with lesser numbers of other migrant lepidoptera at my home in west Devon. Single examples *C. cardui* and *Vanessa atalanta* L. appeared during the morning and by 1pm the temperature had risen considerably and rapidly-moving banks of altocumulus were accompanied by a warm wind from the south-east. Between 1.10pm and 1.22pm, sixteen *cardui* appeared from a south-easterly direction and the majority flew rapidly across our meadows, continuing towards Cornwall. Thirty of these butterflies were seen during the half hour from 1.10-1.40pm, together with three *atalanta*, one *Macroglossum stellatarum* L. and a single *Autographa gamma* L., which paused to investigate a flowering Rhododendron. By mid-afternoon *cardui*'s rate of arrival had fallen to about 20-25 per hour. Altogether about fifty were seen during the day. The approximate arrival rates at our eighty-yard long, south-east-facing boundary hedge, were 1.10-1.22: 80 per hour; 1.22-1.40: 47 per hour; 1.55-2.10: 20-25 per hour; and 2.45-3.00: 20-25 per hour. It would seem, then, that the influx peaked here at about, or sometime before, 1pm. The landfall was probably close to Stoke Point, fifteen miles to the south-east. By 5pm the wind had veered to the south-west, the sky clouded over and the temperature fallen; thus ending the only noteworthy event in an otherwise dreary and uneventful month.

However, on 6 June, the hottest day so far of this year, *cardui* again started to appear in large numbers. Twenty-two crossed our boundary hedge between 1.00 and 1.15pm, together with one *stellatarum* and a few decidedly battered *atalanta*. By mid-afternoon, five or six *cardui* were arriving every fifteen minutes and two further *stellatarum* were noted. Small numbers of *cardui* continued to appear until mid-evening. The following day, 7 June, started thundery with much heavy rain but by late morning the sun appeared and yet another wave of *cardui* arrived. Twenty crossed our meadow between 11.15 and 11.25am and both *gamma* and *stellatarum* were active in our garden. During my customary weekend Dartmoor walk, on 8 June, untold thousands of *cardui* were again seen, approaching from the south. Over one hundred were counted in ten minutes. Several could be seen at any one time and again, *stellatarum* and *gamma* were present, the latter in very large numbers. Returning home at around 2pm, swarms of *cardui* were crossing the A386 road, making avoidance impossible. Even through the limited field of view afforded by the car's windscreen six or ten were often visible. This is clearly not just a localised phenomenon, as on 9 June *cardui* was seen in lesser numbers around Birmingham and in Nottingham city centre.— R.W. BOGUE, Kingston House, Tuckermarsh, Bere Alston, Devon PL20 7HB.